

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

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O 102235Z MAY 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI IMMEDIATE
USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 119484

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT BAGHDAD 00980 SENT ACTION SECSTATE 08 MAY 78

QUOTE S E C R E T BAGHDAD 00980

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, IZ
SECRET

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SUBJECT: IRAQI DILEMMA IN THE HORN

REF: A) STATE 116108
B) BAGHDAD 684
C) BAGHDAD 958
D) BAGHDAD 961
E) BAGHDAD 852

1. WE FIND THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN REF A TO BE VERY INTERESTING INDEED. IT INDICATES THAT IRAQI CONCERNS HAVE ADVANCED FARTHER THAN WE WERE AWARE, AND THAT STRAINS IN RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS AND CUBANS OVER THE HORN MAY BE AT CRITICAL POINT. JOINT COMMUNIQUE FOLLOWING VICE-PRESIDENT MAAROUFS TRIP TO HAVANA TOTALLY IGNORED THE HORN, AN INDICATION THAT TWO SIDES DISAGREED. MEANWHILE, ERITREAN LEADERS CONTINUE TO VISIT BAGHDAD AND EXPRESS THANKS FOR IRAQI AID (REF C). LOCAL PRESS CARRIES DAILY STORIES ON THE ERITREAN SIDE OF THE STRUGGLE.

2. ARAB DIPLOMATS HERE ARE OPENLY ANTI-CUBAN, WHILE IRAQI FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS USUALLY WITHDRAW INTO EMBARRASSED SILENCE WHEN THE SUBJECT COMES UP AT SOCIAL GATHERINGS. CURRENT VISIT OF SUDANESE PRESIDENT NUMEIRI IS ANOTHER OCCASION FOR ARABS TO REMIND IRAQIS OF ISSUES WHICH ARE AT STAKE. AS SUGGESTED IN REF B, WE DO NOT BELIEVE SUDANESE HAVE MUCH INFLUENCE HERE, BUT NUMEIRI MAY BE ABLE TO EXPRESS A COLLECTIVE ARAB FEELING ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF ERITEREA AND THE OVERALL THREAT THAT THE CUBAN/SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN THE HORN POSES FOR THE ARAB NATION. WE ALSO ASSUME SAUDIS RAISED THE SUBJECT DURING PRINCE SULTANS VISIT LAST MONTH (REF E).

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3. OTHER COUNTRIES CAN HAVE INFLUENCE IN BAGHDAD ON THIS ISSUE; REF B NAMED IRAN, YUGOSLAVIA, BRAZIL, SPAIN AND SOMALIA AS LIKELY CANDIDATES. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT IRANISANS WOULD HAVE THE MOST WEIGHT. A COUNTRY WHICH WAS NOT ON OUR ORIGINAL LIST BUT SHOULD DEFINITELY BE CONSIDERED IS KUWAIT, WHERE HIGH-LEVEL TALKS WILL TAKE PLACE BEGINNING MAY 16 (REF D).

4. U.S. ROLE: AT THIS TIME, WE DO NOT RECOMMEND MAKING AN-OTHER DIRECT USG DEMARCHE TO THE IRAQIS. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT WE COULD MARKEDLY STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF ANY COUNTRY THAT MIGHT RAISE THE SUBJECT BY BRINGING TO WORLD--AND PARTICULARLY ARAB WORLD--ATTENTION TO THE GOIS INVOLVEMENT IN FACILITATING THE SOVIET/CUBAN BUILD-UP IN THE HORN. THIS SHOULD BE DONE IN A WAY WHICH DOES NOT IDENTIFY US AS THE SOURCE. THE DISSEMINATION OF THIS INFORMATION, WHICH HAS THUS FAR BEEN RATHER CLOSELY HELD, ESPECIALLY IF CARRIED IN THE ARAB PRESS, MIGHT INTENSIFY GROWING IRAQI EMBASSASSMENT AND CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH THE BAGHDAD REGIME COULD MORE EASILY REVISE ITS POLICY. IT MAY WELL BE THAT THE IRAQIS ARE LOOKING FOR JUST SUCH AN EXCUSE TO JUSTIFY A CONFRONTATION WITH THEIR SOVIET AND CUBAN FRIENDS.

PECK

UNQUOTE VANCE

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